

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0034] with the following amended paragraph:

[0034)] Fig. 2 illustrates an overview of a system 200 in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. System 200 includes a server 202, database 204, a client 206, and one or more enclosures 208 which are each in communication with one or more respective field devices 210. Although server 202 and database 204 are shown separated, in some embodiments, server 202 and database 204 are located within the same physical structure. Two enclosures 208 are shown in Fig. 2, but other embodiments can include more or fewer. Server 202, client 206, and enclosures 208 are connected to one another via a TCP/IP connection 205 such as Ethernet, although other embodiments may use other network protocols.

Please replace paragraph [0094] with the following amended paragraph:

[0094] Because a system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention is primarily software based and because each enclosure includes its own operating system, accommodating additional user-desired third- party systems or components is relatively straightforward. Third-party systems or components are those systems or components developed by someone other than the vendor or developer of an access control system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention, and may include legacy systems or components. For instance, referring to Fig. 18, if a user desired to add a third-party Time and Attendance server 702 to the system, such a server could be connected to a personality module 314 and an application could easily be created to be stored at the enclosure and run by the PM Manager 209 to provide appropriate information to the Time and Attendance server (e.g., time in and time out of cardholders). In contrast, in conventional systems, as shown in Fig. 17, any information relevant to a Time and Attendance server 702 is passed from a reader 110 to the server 102 and to a database where it is stored in accordance with specialized procedures, typically in some kind of table 704. Not only are there many more potential points of failure (e.g., at the reader panel 104,

the server 102, the database 103), which is not usually acceptable when employee's payroll is involved (as it is with most Time and Attendance programs), but the Time and Attendance server 702 must continually poll the database 103 for new information, creating considerable overhead for the Time and Attendance Server. Alternatively, in a conventional system, all of the PROMs at all of the panels 104 controlling the readers could be physically changed out to allow direct interface to the Time and Attendance server. Such a measure, however, is less than desirable, and becomes an administrative nightmare for a vendor who has to provide such a service to many thousands of customers, when no two customers want exactly the same thing. But because a system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention is driven by software at each respective enclosure, download of such a program to each enclosure is a simple procedure that can be administered remotely. In other words, interfacing with these devices is a matter of software programming and not hardware design. Although a Time and Attendance server is described above, it is to be understood that such a server is exemplary only. A system in accordance with an embodiment of the invention could similarly accommodate virtually any user-desired third-party system, including servers, components, or applications.